

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SECTO 02027 171402Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
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O 171326Z FEB 77
FM USDEL SECRETARY IN CAIRO
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTO 2027

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG PFOR EG US IS
SUBJECT: AMOCO DRILLING ACTIVITIES IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: (A) CAIRO 2881 (B) CAIRO 2819 (C) CAIRO 2790
(D) SECTO 2004 (E) SECTO 2015

1. FOLLOWING ARE DETAILS REQUESTED PARA 4 REFTEL (E):
A. RIG 511, WHICH IS RECTANGULAR IN SHAPE IS CURRENTLY
IN NORTH/SOUTH POSITION. EIGHT ANCHOR CHAINS ARE NORMALLY
PLACED RADIATING FROM CENTER SHIP, FOUR ALONG NORTH/SOUTH/
EAST/WEST AXES AND FOUR AT 45 DEGREE ANGLES IN BETWEEN, THUS
FORMING CIRCULAR PATTERN AROUND BOAT. ALL ANCHORS FOR RIG
511 WERE INITIALLY SET BEFORE ISRAELI PATROL BOAT ORDERED
THE 3 ANCHOR CHAINS LYING EAST OF THE RIG RETRIEVED.
FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WITH ISRAELI PATROL BOAT LATE FEB 14.
AMOCO AGREED RESET THREE EASTERN ANCHORS, SHORTENING THESE
ANCHOR CHAINS FROM 4200 TO 3000 FEET. AMOCO WAS IN PROCESS
OF RETRIEVING FIRST OF THESE ANCHORS, THE DUE EAST ONE,
WHEN ISRAELI PATROL BOAT RETURNED AND SAID THAT THIS
SOLUTION NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE. OTHER TWO ANCHORS,
NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST, ARE STILL AT 4200 FEET.

B. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT, ACCORDING ORIGINAL AMOCO
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CALCULATIONS ALL EIGHT ANCHORS SET AT 4200 FEET WERE
ON WEST SIDE OF SO-CALLED MEDIAN LINE. NOT KNOWING PRECISE
DEFINITION OF ISRAELI LINE, AMOCO CANNOT SAY DEFINITELY
WHICH ANCHORS ARE EAST OF THE SO-CALLED MEDIAN LINE. IT
ASSUMES, BASED ON OBJECTION OF ISRAELI PATROL BOAT,
THAT ALL THREE EASTERN ANCHORS VIOLATE ISRAELI ZONE OF
CONTROL.

C. DURATION OF DRILLING OPERATIONS DEPEND UPON DEPTH OF WELL. AMOCO EXPECTS THAT RIG 511 WILL BE ON LOCATION FOR 30-45 DAYS AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF DRILLING.

2. AMOCO HAS JUST INFORMED US THAT IT INTENDS ATTEMPT PLACE DUE EAST ANCHOR ON 3000 FT. CHAIN AT ABOUT 1400 LOCAL TIME FEB 17.

3. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM RAS SHUKAIR EVENING FEB 16 AND MORNING FEBRUARY 17, AMOCO EMPLOYEES HAVE CITED TOTAL OF SEVEN ELRAELI NAVAL VESSELS STANDING OFF RIG 511, ONE DESCRIBED AS A LARGE SHIP WITH MISSILES.

4. YOU SHOULD INFORM EVRON OF AMOCO'S PLANS AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, INCLUDING FACT THAT THEY PLAN TO PUT EASTERN ANCHOR DOWN AGAIN, THIS TIME AT 3000 FT. YOU SHOULD TELL EVRON THAT WE BELIEVE THIS REPORT MEETS ISRAELI REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AMOCO'S INTENTIONS, AND SECRETARY URGES STRONGLY THAT THIS INCIDENT NOW BE CLOSED. IF HE INDICATES THAT ISRAELI VESSELS WILL NOT BE CALLED OFF, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT IT WILL SIMPLY NOT BE UNDERSTOOD IF ISRAELIS PERSIST IN MAKING INCIDENT OF A MINOR ISSUE OF THIS KIND. FYI, WHILE ISRAELIS THEMSELVES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT RIG ITSELF IS WEST OF SO-CALLED MEDIAN LINE AND AMOCO SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFERENT DEFINITION OF LINE, WHICH PUTS EVEN EASTERN ANCHORS WEST OF LINE, WE WANT TO AVOID GIVING APPEARANCE THAT US ACCEPTS SUCH LINE BY BEING DRAWN INTO DISCUSSIONS OF ITS LOCATIONS.
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END FYI.
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